

LAW OFFICES

Belli, Ashe and Gerry

SAN FRANCISCO 11 - TUKON 1-1849
The Belli Building - 722 MONTGOMERY STREET

MELVIN M. BELLI
LOU ASHE
RICHARD F. GERRY
JACK G. MCBRIDE
VASILIOS B. CHOULOS
JAMES J. REILLY
SEYMOUR L. ELLISON
DAVID M. McDAHEY

ROME, ITALY, TOKYO, JAPAN

CABLE "BELEA"

LOS ANGELES (BEVERLY HILLS) BRADSHAW 2-9924
CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
CRESCENT DRIVE AND WILSHIRE BLVD
BELLI, STRONG, ASHE AND GERRY

MELVIN M. BELLI
WILLIAM STRONG
LOU ASHE
RICHARD F. GERRY
JOHN W. OLSON
DANNY R. JONES
OF COUNSEL
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK
WILLIAM STRONG
280 MADISON AVENUE

San Francisco, May 15, 1960

TENTH ANNUAL BELLI SEMINAR "A Decade of Trial and Tort Trends"

San Francisco, Friday, July 22, 1960
Washington, D.C., Sunday, August 28, 1960

8:30 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Dear Friends:

I am writing this letter to the NACCA members in and around the District of Columbia where the second part of the Belli Seminar will be held, Sunday, August 28, 1960, 8:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. at the Presidential Arms.

We want your cooperation to put on a particularly good Seminar. It's the day before the American Bar Convention.

The San Francisco Seminar will emphasize ten years of trends in the Common Law with emphasis on the leading cases over the ten year period. The speakers will attempt to prognose future trends.

On the other hand, the Washington, D.C. Seminar will emphasize medical specialties not heretofore discussed at prior forensic medicine and "medico-legal" Seminars. On the law side at Washington we shall consider the various federal agencies and courts and specialized practices that the lawyer should know about, but few do.

Of course, I hope you will attend and we hope you will submit a paper or question both for the San Francisco as well as the Washington Seminar.

Dr. Paul Cantor is the Medical Chairman of the Washington Seminar, and J. Kelly Farris of Portland, Oregon with James L. O'Dea of my office, the Legal Chairmen.

All good wishes

MELVIN M. BELLI

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 6-17-80 BY SP-7AG/EBM

MMB:15

OSURE

FBI

Date: 9/2/60

Mr. Mohr
Mr. Parsons
Mr. Belmont
Mr. Callahan
Mr. DeLoach
Mr. Malone
Mr. McGuire
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tamm
Mr. Trotter
Mr. W.C. Sullivan
Tele. Room
Mr. Ingram
Miss Gandy

(Type in plain text or code)

(Priority or Method of Mailing)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM: SAC, WFO (105-18134)

MELVIN M. BELLI

SF
(OO-SF)

105-49865

Bravely

ReSFlet 7/10/56, instant caption, enclosing a letterhead memo setting forth background information pertaining to captioned subject.

[REDACTED]

Above for info.

EX 109 REC 31

105-49865-12

③ - Bureau

1 - San Francisco (105-4626) (Info) (RM)

1 - WFO

13 SEP 7 1960

IDL:maf

(5)

CLASS. & EXT. BY SP2TAP/Em
REASON FOR EXT. 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW 9-2-80

AIRTEL

G C. Wick

9/19/60

Approved

Sent

M

Per

G. A. S.

SAC, San Francisco (105-4626)

9/7/60

Director, FBI (105-49865) 12

EX 109 REC-31
MELVIN M. BELLI
IS - BU

(Room 524)

ReWFOairtel 9/2/60.

SE should submit a letterhead memo suitable for dissemination, classified Confidential, setting forth pertinent information contained in reairtel, together with sufficient background information identifying subject.

Both SF and WFO should be on the alert for additional information from established sources indicating subject has actually left the US for Bulgaria. If such information is obtained, it should be furnished in a form suitable for dissemination also.

2 - WFO (105-18134)

JJM:prg
(2)

Note: Subject is a member of the American Bar Association (ABA) and a notorious publicity seeker. During the Annual ABA Meeting in 1959 at Miami Beach, subject embarrassed the ABA by bringing Mickey Cohen and setting up a seminar to run concurrently with the ABA Meeting. During recent ABA Meetings in WDC, we received a circular indicating subject had scheduled the 10th Annual Belli Seminar at WDC for Sunday, 8/28/60 at the Presidential Arms. This was reported in a memo from Mr. H. L. Edwards to Mr. Malone dated 8/9/60.

MAILED 27

SEP 7 1960

COMM-FBI

52 SEP 9 1960

FBI

Date: 9/29/60

Transmit the following in

PLAIN TEXT

(Type in plain text or code)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

AIRTEL

AIR MAIL - REGISTERED

(Priority or Method of Mailing)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (105-49865)

FROM: SAC, SAN FRANCISCO (105-4626)

SUBJECT: MELVIN M. BELLI

ALL INFO

Re Bu O-1 9/26/60. ReBulet to San Francisco 9/7/60
and WFO Airtel to Bureau 9/2/60.

SFO by letter to Bureau 3/18/60 submitted a letterhead memo containing background information of MELVIN M. BELLI. Enclosed letterhead memo is a supplemental letterhead memo containing information since that date.

Source mentioned in letterhead memo is WF 1193-S*, who furnished information on 9/1/60.

LEADS THE SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE

At San Francisco, California

3 - Bureau (Encls. 5) (AM REG) 1 - WFO (Encl. 1) (105-18134) info (REG)

Approved: *[Signature]*
Special Agent in Charge

Sent

M

Per

(6)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
422 Federal Office Building
Civic Center
San Francisco, California

September 29, 1960

RE: MELVIN M. BELLI

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

The September 1960 San Francisco Telephone Directory reflects MELVIN M. BELLI, BELLI, ASHE and GERRY, 722 Montgomery Street, telephone YUKON 1-1849, residence 1228 Montgomery Street, telephone YUKON 2-2146.

CALIF
The 1959 San Francisco City Directory reflects MELVIN M. (JOY T. BELLI, ASHE, MC BRIDE and GERRY) resides at 1228 Montgomery Apartment 8, San Francisco. Lists BELLI, ASHE, MC BRIDE and GERRY (MELVIN M. BELLI, JACK G. MC BRIDE, RICHARD F. GERRY) lawyers with offices at 240 Stockton Street, 10th Floor, San Francisco.

The 1960 Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory lists MELVIN M. BELLI, attorney, San Francisco, California, born 1907, admitted to the Bar 1933, member of the American Bar Association and having graduated from the University of California with a B.A. and LL.B. Degree. The directory also lists BELLI, ASHE and GERRY, Federal Office Building, San Francisco.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ENCLOSURE

COPIES DESTROYED

9 25 AUG 9 1972

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The September 25, 1960 issue of the "San Francisco Examiner," Page 2, Highlight Section, Column 3, reveals that a new book published by Bobbs-Merrill is called "Belli Looks at Life and Law in Japan." The article continued: "Characteristically, it has a preface by Toshio Irie, Justice of the Supreme Court of Japan, and a foreward by the late Errol Flynn."

The August 4, 1960 issue of the "San Francisco Examiner," Page 1, Section III, Column 1, reveals that Barrister MEL BELLI will travel to Russia in December 1960 to gather background for his upcoming "Life and Law in Russia."

The July 23, 1960 issue of the "San Francisco Examiner," Page 6, Column 1, reflected that several hundred of the Nation's leading tort lawyers, mainly in the field of personal injury, attended attorney MELVIN M. BELLI's 12 hour 10th Annual Torts Seminar at the Fairmont Hotel on July 22, 1960. The article continued "BELLI's surprise guest at his last seminar was gangland figure MICKEY COHEN, who was billed as a tax problems professor. This time it was the school teacher stripper, PATTI WHITE, who is appearing in a North Beach bistro."

The July 20, 1960 issue of the "San Francisco Chronicle," Page 32, Column 1, reveals that the Tenth Annual Belli Seminar on Law, medicine and trial tactics will be held at the Fairmont Hotel Friday preceding the National Association of Claimants' Compensation Attorneys Convention.

The May 3, 1960 issue of the "San Francisco Examiner," Page 2, Column 8, reflected that BEVERLY AADLAND, 17 year old playmate of the late Errol Flynn requested the court to continue as her counsel MELVIN BELLI.

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (105-49865)

DATE: 11/9/60

FROM : SAC, SAN FRANCISCO (105-4626)

SUBJECT: MELVIN M. BELLI
IS-BU

Re San Francisco airtel to Bureau dated 9/29/60.

The translation of the article from "Novaya Zarya" Russian language newspaper published in San Francisco was performed by Translator [REDACTED] San Francisco Office.

LEADTHE SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE:AT SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA:

2 - Bureau (Encls. 5) (REG)
1 - San Francisco (Encls. 1) (REG)
SJE:mw
(3)

CLASS. & EXT. BY SP2TAP/ELM
REASON FOR EXT. 1.2.2
DATE OF REVIEW 11-9-80

REC-91

10 NOV 15 1960

5 ENCLOSURE

AGENCY State, Civ
REQ. REC'D
DATE FORW. 11-21-60
HOW FORW. 11-14-60
BY GJ/KJH

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

62 NOV 22 1960

UNRECORDED COPY AND COPIES ENCL. FILED IN



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

In Reply, Please Refer to

File No.

November 9, 1960

RE: MELVIN M. BELLI

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The April 18, 1958, issue of the San Francisco News, page 1, columns 3, 4, 5, and 6, contains an article entitled "BUFANO 'Peace' Out in Cold Again", in which BENIAMINO BUFANO attempted to dedicate his 37 foot statue, called "Peace" at the San Francisco Airport. Article stated: "Among those invited: Secy of State DULLES, Governor KNIGHT, Mayor CHRISTOPHER, BENIAMINO BUFANO." "But, it turned out, the governor would not show for the unveiling at the airport tomorrow if the mayor did."

"DULLES, who is running the State Dept., would not show if BUFANO did; for BUFANO is identified with peace movements unfriendly to the department."

The December 21, 1957, issue of the San Francisco Examiner, page 2, column 6, 7, 8, contains an article entitled "BUFANO Reports Bulganin Full of Red Tinted Peace Dreams" in which Sculptor BENNY BUFANO describes his adventures in Soviet Russia, including a two hour session with Premier NIKOLAI BULGANIN in which they discussed, "from Sputnik I and II, nuclear science, art, guided missiles, disarmament and world economy to Hungary, Red China, and the United Nations."

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
ENCLOSURE

CLASS. 6-12-80

REASON

DATE

COPIES DESTROYED
9 25 AUG 28 1972

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING SLIP ON 6-26-80

CONFIDENTIAL

0
1
2
3 The December 24, 25, 1957 issue of "Novaya
4 Zarya", Russian language newspaper published in San
5 Francisco, page 3, columns 1-4, and page 22, column 6
6 reveals that a prominent local sculptor BENJAMINO BUFANO
7 returned to San Francisco having flown to Moscow for the
8 celebration of the 40th anniversary of the revolution.
9 BUFANO had a two hour conversation with Soviet Prime
0 Minister NIKOLAI BULGANIN concerning "Sputniks", nuclear
1 science, art, disarmament, economics, Hungary, China and
2 the U. N.

3
4 BUFANO pointed out that BULGANIN told him that
5 he and KHRUSCHEV were against the Soviet intervention in
6 Hungary; that they wished to let the Hungarian people
7 themselves decide the question, but they had the minority
8 voices in the Presidium, and as a result the Soviet forces
9 crushed the uprising. BUFANO noted that this showed
0 real democracy in action and that KHRUSCHEV does not have
1 any power.

2
3 "These people are entirely different," BUFANO
4 stated. "They desire peace more than we, for the simple
5 reason that they wish to help people."

6
7 BUFANO pointed out that Russia made such an
8 impression on him that he offered to make a statue of
9 "Peace" 400 feet in height. Such statue would be out of
0 stainless steel and mosaics and would be the greatest
1 statue in the world. BUFANO noted that BULGANIN took
2 his offer into consideration.

3
4 On the letterhead of the Friends of the Abraham
5 Lincoln Brigade, Abraham Lincoln Battalion, George Washington
6 Battalion, 715 Ashbury Street, San Francisco, California,
7 dated August 18, 1937, appears the name BENJAMINO BUFANO as
8 a State Sponsor.

9
0 The Abraham Lincoln Brigade is an organization
1 designated by the Attorney General of the United States
2 pursuant to E. O. 10450.

3
4 This document contains neither
5 recommendations nor conclusions of
6 the FBI. It is the property of the
7 FBI and is loaned to your agency;
8 it and its contents are not to be
9 distributed outside your agency.

CONFIDENTIAL

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO DIRECTOR, FBI (105-49865)

DATE: 12/23/60

FROM *RDA* SAC, SAN FRANCISCO (105-4626)

SUBJECT: MELVIN M. BELLI
IS-BU

Re San Francisco letter to Bureau, 11/9/60.

-C-
2 - Bureau
1 - San Francisco
SJE:ca.
(3)
#12

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES AND FIELD OFFICE
ADVISED BY ROUTING SLIP ON 6-26-80

CLASS. & EXT. BY *SP4TAP/EM*
REASON-FOIA b1, b2
DATE OF REVIEW 12-23-80

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

EX-105

REC-8

7 DEC 28 1960

62 JAN 5 1961

11/2/61

AIRTEL

AIRMAIL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI
FROM: SAC, LOS ANGELES
RE: LYNN W. JOHNSTON
MUNICIPAL JUDGE
DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA
MISCELLANEOUS - INFORMATION CONCERNING

Enclosed for the Bureau are clippings appearing in Los Angeles newspapers November 1 and 2, 1961, which are self-explanatory.

For the Bureau's information, Judge LYNN W. JOHNSTON, Municipal Judge of Downey, California, a Los Angeles suburb, has been charged with offering leniency for love to four women defendants. He is under trial charged with bribery.

His defense attorney MELVIN BELLI, a prominent San Francisco lawyer, as a defense attorney, apparently intends to show that there was friction between Chief IVAN ROBINSON (WA) of the Downey Police Department and Judge JOHNSTON; that this emanated from ROBINSON's attempting to tell JOHNSTON what sentences he should impose and JOHNSTON's opinion that the Downey Police Department was not properly handling narcotics violations. BELLI appears to be preparing to show that in view of the lack of cooperation between ROBINSON and JOHNSTON that JOHNSTON thereupon set out to conduct his own investigation into narcotics matters and that this was the reason he was in contact with defendants who appeared before him in court. BELLI apparently intends to show that because of the conflict between JOHNSTON and ROBINSON and JOHNSTON's investigation into narcotics at Downey that ROBINSON and the Downey Police Department thereupon set out to frame JOHNSTON and that the entire case in this matter is a frame-up of JOHNSTON by ROBINSON and the Downey Police Department.

- 2 - Bureau (Enc. 5)
- 1 - Los Angeles
- CWP:elc
- (4)

66 NOV 27 1961

NOV 21 1961

105-4786
NOT RECORDED
140 NOV 1961

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

6-17-80

SP27mp/c

1 This office has followed the matter in the press
2 and a letter was directed to the Bureau on November 1, 1961,
3 captioned "IVAN ROBINSON, JR., Chief of Police, Downey,
4 California, FBINA Associate." Our interest was only because
5 ROBINSON was a National Academy graduate.

6
7 On November 1, 1961, S. J. TRAINOR, Chief of the
8 Federal Bureau of Narcotics telephonically contacted this
9 office and made reference to instant trial of JOHNSTON.
10 TRAINOR stated that an investigator for the District
11 Attorney's Office advised that as part of its defense,
12 JOHNSTON's attorneys would claim that JOHNSTON wrote a
13 letter to the FBI. The investigator asked TRAINOR whether
14 a letter complaining of narcotics conditions in Downey had
15 been written to the Federal Bureau of Narcotics. TRAINOR
16 stated he had checked their files but could not locate any
17 letter from the Judge. TRAINOR wondered if such a letter
18 had been directed to this office inasmuch as he knew we
19 promptly referred narcotics matters to his office, feeling
20 we might be able to find such a letter which he was unable
21 to find. A search was made of Los Angeles files and no
22 such letter was located.

23 [REDACTED] b7C

24 [REDACTED]

25 [REDACTED]

26 TRAINOR was recontacted and advised that we had
27 no record of a letter from Judge JOHNSTON. He was advised,
28 however, that our files are confidential and that he should
29 not tell the investigator from the District Attorney's
30 Office the results of the check of our files. TRAINOR
31 stated he understood and would not make any statement that
32 a letter from Judge JOHNSTON had not been sent to the FBI.

33 [REDACTED] b7C

34 [REDACTED]

35 [REDACTED]

36 [REDACTED] stated that attorney
37 MELVIN BELLI had turned the JOHNSTON trial into a trial of
38 ROBINSON, and was attempting to make ROBINSON the
39 defendant. He said that BELLI was one of the most vicious
40 and unscrupulous individuals that he had ever encountered;
41 that BELLI was making numerous unfounded allegations against
42 ROBINSON; and that [REDACTED] did not know how to counter
43 this type of attack.

44 [REDACTED]

45 [REDACTED]

46 [REDACTED]

47 [REDACTED]

48 [REDACTED]

49 [REDACTED]

50 [REDACTED]

51 [REDACTED]

52 [REDACTED]

0
1 [REDACTED] stated he did not know Judge
2 JOHNSTON very well at all but knew of his extremely bad
3 reputation for chasing after women before he was appointed
4 to the Downey Municipal Bench. [REDACTED] stated for that
5 reason he had stayed at arms length from JOHNSTON. [REDACTED]
6 [REDACTED]

7 [REDACTED] he recalls only one brief two-minute
8 conversation with JOHNSTON over these years. [REDACTED]
9 [REDACTED]
10 [REDACTED]
11 [REDACTED]
12 [REDACTED]
13 [REDACTED]

14 [REDACTED] stated the unfounded allegations
15 of BELLI were being printed in many newspapers and made
16 reference to an article which had appeared in the November 1
17 issue of the "Huntington Park Signal," an afternoon paper
18 published in the small suburb of Huntington Park. A copy
19 of this article is enclosed herewith. The article in effect
20 states that the feud between Judge JOHNSTON and Chief
21 ROBINSON worsened after JOHNSTON had written a letter to
22 the FBI ~~AND~~ Chief ROBINSON had destroyed an arrest record
23 in a heroin case. [REDACTED]
24 [REDACTED]
25 [REDACTED]
26 [REDACTED]

27 [REDACTED] stated that questions in his mind
28 were whether JOHNSTON had made such a complaint to the FBI
29 and whether the FBI had investigated any such complaint. He
30 went on to state that he felt this data put out by BELLI was
31 completely false and that he recognized he would have been
32 aware of any investigation. [REDACTED] stated that his
33 knowledge of FBI jurisdiction is such that FBI does not
34 handle narcotics matters, nor would they be interested in
35 any alleged destruction of a record of a drug addict.
36 [REDACTED]

37 A complete review of all possible references in
38 the Los Angeles Office was made and a review of all
39 correspondence in the 12-0 file (narcotics matters) going
40 back to 1955 has been made with negative results.
41 [REDACTED]

42 I talked to [REDACTED] and he fully realizes
43 the confidential nature of our files and stated that he
44 would do everything he could to avoid any interjection of
45 FBI in this matter.
46 [REDACTED]
47 [REDACTED]
48 [REDACTED]
49 [REDACTED]
50 [REDACTED]
51 [REDACTED]
52 [REDACTED]

It is noted that the clipping from the "Daily Signal," enclosed herewith, reflects that JOHNSTON and ROBINSON also had words over an alleged wire tap made by the Chief of Police in a meeting room where the City of Commerce incorporation was being discussed.

[REDACTED] was informed that based on facts furnished by him, there appeared to be no violation within the investigative jurisdiction of the FBI.

This matter will be followed closely and the Bureau will be kept advised of pertinent developments. Every care will be taken to avoid our being interjected into this matter.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO: Mr. DeLoach

DATE: November 13, 1961

FROM: M. A. Jones

SUBJECT: LYNN W. JOHNSTON
MUNICIPAL JUDGE
DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA

Tolson	
Belmont	
Mohr	
DeLoach	
Casper	
Callahan	
Conrad	
Felt	
Gale	
Rosen	
Sullivan	
Tavel	
Trotter	
Tele. Room	
Ingram	
Gandy	

By airtel, the Los Angeles Office advised that Judge Lynn W. Johnston has been charged with offering leniency for love to four women defendants. In effect, the charges are that Johnston would take care of a probation violation or similar matter if the woman would pay the judge "little visits." Melvin Belli, a prominent San Francisco and Los Angeles lawyer, as a defense apparently intends to show that there was friction between Chief Ivan Robinson (NA) of the Downey Police Department and Judge Johnston; that this emanated from Robinson's attempting to tell Johnston what sentences he should impose and Johnston's opinion that the Downey Police Department was not properly handling narcotics violations. Johnston claims this whole thing is a frame-up by Robinson. Robinson claims that he does not know Judge Johnston very well but he did know of his extremely bad reputation for cheating after women before he was appointed to the Bench. According to Robinson, Belli has turned the Johnston trial into a trial of Robinson and attempting to make Robinson the defendant. [REDACTED] described Belli as one of the most vicious and unscrupulous individuals he has ever encountered. The Director noted on the airtel that Belli is "a shyster."

In connection with the trial, a representative of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics contacted the Los Angeles Office on 11-1-61 advising that he had received information from the local District Attorney's Office that as part of Johnston's defense he would claim that Johnston wrote a letter to the FBI complaining of narcotics conditions in Downey. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics in Los Angeles apparently has no record that such a letter was written to them and there is no record that Johnston wrote to the Los Angeles Office of this Bureau in this regard. It is also noted that an item in the 11-1-61 issue of the "Daily Signal" Belli charged in his opening statement in the trial that the feud between Johnston and Robinson's men worsened after Johnston complained to the FBI and Robinson destroyed an arrest report in a heroine case. [REDACTED]

Bufiles have been checked and no record could be located of a letter from Johnston. The possibility exists, however, that if such a letter had been sent here to FBI Headquarters and it solely concerned narcotics, it is not under our jurisdiction, it would have been referred to the Federal Bureau of Narcotics.

58 NOV 23 1961

EAC:joc
(3)

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

6-17-80

SP-1AP/ECM

Jones to DeLoach (continued)

by form and we would have no record of it. This is an approved procedure where it is a matter in another agency's jurisdiction. With regard to Belli, we had difficulty with him in the past. In 1947, he charged that FBI Agents were harassing his clients and he was accused by an insurance company of unethical practices in soliciting clients. In 1941, he sent greetings to the Soviet Union in support of the Red Army's struggle against Nazi Germany. In 1949, he protested the prosecution of 12 communist leaders to Alben Barkley.

In June, 1950, he entertained the Yugoslav Counsel General at San Francisco in his home. In 1951, his name appeared on the letterhead of the "Loyalties Against Perjury Oaths for the Bar" which group opposed the requirement that candidates for admission to the Bar and members of the California Bar take a loyalty oath. In 1957, Herbert Resner, an admitted former member of the Communist Party and former attorney for the Party, was associated with Belli. In 1959, Belli received notoriety for defending racketeer Mickey Cohen and Cohen claimed that Belli was going to defend stripteaser Candy Barr, a girlfriend of Cohen's. In addition to this, Belli has pulled such unethical tricks as in August, 1959, when he introduced west coast mobster Mickey Cohen at a seminar on legal tactics during the American Bar Association Convention. Cohen was introduced as "Professor C'Brien," an expert on tax evasion and other criminal cases. The Director has stated that our San Francisco Office should keep alert for any violations of law by Belli as his record is questionable.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (105-49865)

DATE: 11-30-62

FROM : SAC, WFO (105-18134) (P)

SUBJECT: MELVIN M. BELLI
IS-BU

ReSFlet 11-9-60.

On 10-11-62, [REDACTED] Chief Counsel, Passport Office, USDS, advised that a passport application was being processed for MELVIN M. BELLI and a recommendation had been made by his office that passport facilities be granted to him.

On 10-19-62, a request was submitted to USDS for a search of Passport Office records under this name. On 11-27-62, it was necessary to resubmit this request since the Passport Office was unable to locate the original request.

Pertinent information from this file will be submitted to the Bureau immediately upon receipt of same. USDS is being closely followed in this matter.

REC-6

105-49865-12

25 DEC 4 1962

2 - Bureau
1 - WFO

DMB:ctw
(3)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

DATE 6-17-80

60 DEC 10 1962

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (105-49865)

DATE: 12/11/62

FROM : SAC, WFO (105-18134) (RUC)

SUBJECT: CHANGED
MELVIN MOURON BELLI
IS-CUBA

The title of this communication has been changed to show the full name of the subject as obtained from files of the Passport Office, USDS.

ReSFlet 11/9/60 captioned "MELVIN M. BELLI; IS-B".

Enclosed are nine copies for the Bureau and one copy for SF for information of a LHM dated and captioned as above.

Subject's passport file was reviewed by IC [REDACTED]. No additional pertinent information WFO files.

2-Bureau (Enc 9)
1-San Francisco (105-4626) (Info) (Enc 1) (RM)
1-WFO

DMB:kjm
(4)

Copy to: CIA/State/RAO
ONI/CSI/ACSI

by routing slip for info.

Date 12/20/62 by [REDACTED]

MCT - 18

REC-71

DEC 13 1962

DATE 6-17-80

SP2TAP/12



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
December 11, 1962

MELVIN MOURON BELLI
INTERNAL SECURITY - CUBA

On November 30, 1962, Mrs. Verde L. Crenshaw, Passport Office, United States Department of State, made available a file which contained the following information:

On July 8, 1958, ^{MRS} Passport Number 1141530 was issued at San Francisco, California, to Melvin Mouron Belli based on an application filed by him at San Francisco, California, on the same date. The passport was restricted against travel to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary and those portions of China, Korea and Viet-Nam under communist control. According to the application Belli was born on July 29, 1907, at Sonora, California. His permanent residence was 1228 Montgomery Street, and his mailing address 240 Stockton Street, both San Francisco, California. He intended to depart from San Francisco by air on July 12, 1958, for a trip of three weeks' duration to England, Germany, France, Italy and Spain for the purpose of attending a Bar Association meeting in Cologne (country not stated). His parents were identified as Caesar A. Belli, who was born in 1885 at Eureka, Nevada, and Leonie Mouron, who was born in 1887 at Sonora, California. Both were deceased. Belli showed that he was last married in April, 1956, to Joy Belli, who was born in 1928 at Los Angeles, California, and was presently residing with him. Belli's occupation was shown as that of lawyer. On September 1, 1960, this passport was renewed at Washington, D. C., for a trip to Bulgaria, Turkey, Italy and France, the purpose of this travel being set forth as "lawyer-author".

On August 24, 1962, Passport Number C-529868 was issued at Los Angeles, California, to the above individual, based on his application filed at Los Angeles on August 20, 1962. According to the application his permanent residence was Belli Building, San Francisco, California, and his mailing address Continental Bank Building, 873 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, California.

The application showed that Belli was last married on March 22, 1954, to Joy Turner Belli, who was born at Los Angeles, California, in December, 1930. The

COPIES DESTROYED

9 20 AUG 9 1972

105-4460-10
ENCLOSURE

01 MR2
02 RE: MELVIN MOURON BELLI

03 application further showed that Belli had been married
04 to one Betty Ballantine, who was born in California in
05 1910, but that this marriage had been terminated by divorce.
06

07 He intended to depart from Los Angeles by air
08 on September 1, 1962, to travel as a tourist for one month
09 to Italy, France, England, Albania, Yugoslavia, Greece,
10 Hungary and Bulgaria. This passport was restricted
11 against travel to Albania, Cuba and those portions of
12 China, Korea and Viet-Nam under communist control. By
13 letter dated November 15, 1962, the Passport Office in
14 Washington, D. C., validated this passport for one round
15 trip to Cuba not to extend beyond January 30, 1963, for
16 the purpose of writing articles for a law review.
17

18 The file showed that passports had previously
19 been issued to Belli in 1929, 1947, 1949, 1954 and 1956
20 for travel to various European countries and, in 1954,
21 to Japan.
22

23 This document contains neither
24 recommendations nor conclusions of
25 the FBI. It is the property of
26 the FBI and is loaned to your agency;
27 it and its contents are not to be
28 distributed outside your agency.
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LAW OFFICES

Belli, Asher and Gerry

SAN FRANCISCO 11 - YUASH 1-1849
The Belli Building - 722 MONTGOMERY STREET

MELVIN M. BELLI
LOU ASHER
RICHARD F. GERRY
SEYMOUR L. ELLISON
ROBERT H. MILLER
JACK G. McBRIDE
VASILIOS S. CHOULOS
DAVID W. MCGAHEY

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
WILLIAM F. REED
NORMAN G. CARLIN
630 SAN DIEGO TRUST & SAVINGS BUILDING
15 - BELMONT 9-1175

ROME, ITALY TOKYO, JAPAN

CABLE "BELEA"

LOS ANGELES 55 - HOLLYWOOD 5-4430
CONTINENTAL JANA BUILDING
8730 SUNSET BOU E. RD
BELLI, ASHER AND GERRY

MELVIN M. BELLI
LOU ASHER
RICHARD F. GERRY
DONALD E. LEE
DANNY P. JOHNSON
SAMUEL L. BELL
SAUL GRUBBS
S. M. OAT
SEYMOUR L. ELLISON
OF COUNSEL

San Francisco - March 8, 1963

Air Mail

Dr. Fred Miller
Federal Bureau of Investigation
3700 Washington Avenue
Washington, D. C.

Dear Doctor Miller:

It was very nice meeting you recently and I am looking forward to seeing you on my next visit to Washington. It is my hope that we can possibly get together on some FBI pictures that I might use for a new book I am doing on criminal law.

* MODERN TRIALS (Abridged Edition) is the one-volume abridgment for the layman as well as the law student of the famed six-volume MODERN TRIALS, which was the first and is the best-selling law book of its kind in the last ten years.

This current abridged edition is particularly slanted for general reader as well as law student and lawyer interest. We expect a large sale to the lay public. It will be followed by my demonstrative evidence criminal law book, a new venture in publishing, since it, too, has been written for laymen as well as lawyers.

The book is being accepted for teaching use in many of the major law schools of the United States, but we are particularly interested now that the layman see what is the law, of what it is made, and how it is practiced. We hope that this is the book which tells him, as well as the law student.

We have asked our publishers, Bobbs-Merrill, to send you a copy of this book and are hoping that you might be able to do a review for us.

All good wishes,

MELVIN M. BELLI

MMB:eg

CC: Leo Gobin

6-17-90

SP2TAP/ESM

March 13, 1963

REC-72

105-49861-18
EX-102

Mr. Melvin M. Belli
Belli, Ashe and Gerry
The Belli Building
722 Montgomery Street
San Francisco 11, California

Dear Mr. Belli:

Your letter of March 8, 1963, addressed to Special Agent Fred M. Miller, was noted by Mr. Hoover as he was leaving the city. He wanted me to inform you that as a matter of policy, it will not be possible for Dr. Miller to comment concerning your book, and the heavy pressure of our official responsibilities precludes our furnishing the other assistance you requested.

Sincerely yours,

Helen W. Gandy
Secretary

MAILED 20
MAR 13 1963
COMM-FBI

NOTE: See Mr. Jones to DeLoach memo, 3/13/63, captioned: "Mr. Melvin M. Belli, Belli, Ashe and Gerry, The Belli Building, 722 Montgomery Street, San Francisco 11, California."

CJH:dgs

REC'D FBI

RECEIVED

DATE 6-17-80

APR 1 1963

59 MAR 31 1963 TELETYPE UNIT

Tolson	
Belmont	
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Tele. Rm.	
Holmes	
Gandy	

DATE: 3/13/63

FROM : M. A. Jones

SUBJECT: MR. MELVIN M. BELLI
BELLI, ASHE AND GERRY
THE BELLI BUILDING
722 MONTGOMERY STREET
SAN FRANCISCO 11, CALIFORNIA

α Captioned individual has sent a letter dated 3/8/63 to Special Agent Fred M. Miller of the Laboratory. Belli refers to a recent meeting with SA Miller, that he looks forward to seeing him on his next visit to Washington, and he expresses the hope that he can receive some assistance on FBI pictures which he might use in a new book he is writing on criminal law. Belli also refers to a book he has authored, "Modern Trials," and notes he has requested the publisher to send a copy to SA Miller in the hopes that the latter may be able to review it.

BACKGROUND:

On 2/15/63, SA Miller delivered a paper, "The Forensic Scientist in Court," before the American Academy of Forensic Sciences in Chicago. Belli approached SA Miller afterwards and complimented him on the paper. This was the only contact SA Miller had with Belli.

INFORMATION IN BUFILES:

Consulting with CIA

Enclosure sent 3-18-62
2-9-62 Conrad Enclosures (2)

REC- 75

23 MAR 67

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M. A. Jones to DeLoach Memo

Re: Mr. Melvin M. Belli

San Francisco, California

Consultations with CIA

[REDACTED]

In an airtel dated 11/2/61, Los Angeles furnished details concerning Belli's defense of a local judge who had been charged with offering leniency for love to four women defendants [REDACTED]

Downey, California, at that time described Belli as one of the most vicious and unscrupulous individuals he had ever encountered. The Director noted on the airtel that Belli is "a shyster."

In November, 1962, we received information from the State Department that Belli was intending to visit several foreign countries including Cuba.

OBSERVATIONS:

In view of Belli's unsavory reputation, we certainly do not want to offer him any kind of cooperation nor do any thing to encourage further contact of Bureau personnel by him.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the attached in-absence letter be sent to Belli advising of our inability to be of assistance, and that no further acknowledgement be afforded him.

[Handwritten signatures and initials]

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. DeLoach

DATE: 3-26-63

FROM : M. A. Jones

SUBJECT: MR. MELVIN M. BELLI
 BELLI, ASHE AND GERRY,
 THE BELLI BUILDING
 722 MONTGOMERY STREET
 SAN FRANCISCO 11, CALIFORNIA

Tolson _____
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 Conrad _____
 DeLoach _____
 Evans _____
 Gale _____
 Rosen _____
 Sullivan _____
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BACKGROUND:

My memo of 3-13-63 noted receipt of a letter from captioned individual by SA Fred M. Miller of the Laboratory in which Belli expressed the hope he might receive assistance on FBI pictures he desired to use in a new book he was writing. Belli referred to another book he authored, "Modern Trials," and said he had asked the publisher to send SA Miller a copy in the hope the latter might be able to review it. SA Miller's only contact with Belli had been at a recent scientific convention in Chicago when Belli had congratulated Miller on a paper he had delivered.

In view of Belli's unsavory reputation, he was afforded an in-absence response on 3-13-63 advising of our inability to be of assistance to him and of the fact that SA Miller would not be able to review his book.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT:

A copy of Belli's book, "Modern Trials," has now been received by SA Miller. It has not been reviewed; however, it appears to be a text devoted to the handling, preparation and trial of cases, with the emphasis on negligence matters.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) Since Belli was informed that it would not be possible for a Bureau representative to review this book, it is recommended that no further acknowledgement be sent to him.

(2) That the attached copy of "Modern Trials" be retained in the Bureau Library.

Enclosure

2 - Mr. Conrad

56 APR 1 1963

CJH:par (5)

REC-57

105-49865-20

MAR 28 1963

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 6-17-99 BY SP2TAP/STW

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Ruby's Plea To Be Based On Insanity

DALLAS, Dec. 10 (UPI) — Melvin Belli, spectacularly successful San Francisco lawyer, took over the defense for self-appointed executioner Jack Ruby today and said Ruby will plead innocent by reason of insanity to the slaying of accused presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.

Belli said he has no objections to live television coverage of the trial.

"We will be ready by the scheduled trial date of Feb. 3," he said. "We will plead him not guilty by reason of insanity."

Belli said he may ask for a change of venue to move the trial from Dallas. Belli said he will be Ruby's chief counsel.

Belli visited Ruby in his Dallas County jail cell along with attorneys Tom Howard of Dallas, Sam S. Brody of Los Angeles and J. H. Tonaill of Jasper, Tex.

Howard took the Ruby case hours after Ruby shot and killed Oswald in the basement of the Dallas city jail Nov. 24, before a Nation-wide television audience.

*See me here
memo on Ruby*

The Washington Post and Times Herald _____
 The Washington Daily News _____
 The Evening Star _____
 New York Herald Tribune _____
 New York Journal-American _____
 New York Mirror _____
 New York Daily News _____
 New York Post _____
 The New York Times _____
 The Worker _____
 The New Leader _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The National Observer _____
 People's World _____
 Date _____

22 DEC 27 1963

59 JAN 2 1964

59 MAR 31 1964

DATE 1-17-80 BY SP2A/L/EM

12/11/63

memo

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11/11/63

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

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TO : Mr. Belmont

DATE: December 11, 1963

FROM : A. Rosen

SUBJECT: MELVIN M. BELLI, ATTORNEY
INFORMATION CONCERNING

The Director has asked for a memorandum on Melvin Belli, who, according to newspaper releases of this date, will represent Jack Ruby who will soon be tried for the slaying of accused Presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald. Belli, according to the news releases, will be ready by the scheduled trial date of 2/3/63 and has indicated that defense counsel will plead Ruby not guilty by reason of insanity.

There is attached a memorandum dated 3/13/63 which contains pertinent information in Bureau files concerning Belli.

The only pertinent additional information subsequent to the 3/13/63 memorandum is contained in the file of Jean Kidwell Pestana, a Los Angeles attorney who is active in the Communist Party in Los Angeles, California. Pestana was subpoenaed before a House Committee on Un-American Activities public hearing in Los Angeles on 7/2/63 and immediately requested continuance, stating that she was not represented by counsel as her attorney, Melvin Belli, was unable to attend the hearings at that time. In an appearance before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in Washington, D. C., on 8/5/63 Pestana invoked the Fifth Amendment in answer to Cuba travel and Communist Party membership.

ACTION:

For the Director's information.

Enclosure

- 1 - Mr. Mohr
- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. Sullivan

WFW:ncb
(9)

REC-19

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 6-17-80 BY SP1TAP/EM

5-9 JAN 21 1963

UNRECORDED COPY

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Mr. Tolson	
Mr. Belmont	
Mr. Mohr	
Mr. DeLoach	
Mr. Casper	
Mr. Callahan	
Mr. Conrad	
Mr. Felt	
Mr. Gale	
Mr. Rosen	
Mr. Sullivan	
Mr. Tavel	
Mr. Trotter	
Tele. Room	
Miss Holmes	
Miss Gandy	

COLORFUL

Belli Says He's Not Flamboyant

Melvin Belli insists he is not flamboyant.

Inside the cover of a book he mailed to a Dallas News reporter, Belli, lawyer for Jack Ruby, penned these words:

"To Carl Freund with all good wishes: Melvin Belli. Not a flamboyant lawyer—colorful, yes!"

The book was Belli's own "Ready for the Plaintiff."

After Ruby's bond hearing Monday, Belli again told reporters that he does not like to be called flamboyant.

United Press International went right ahead, however.

Belli is as much a performer as a lawyer, and he is probably the best courtroom performer anyone could book. His silver hair, his flamboyant manner, his flair for the dramatic—all are part of the image that has contributed to the 55-year-old Belli's reputation as one of San Francisco's most effective lawyers.

Belli, the actor, was once summed up this way by Dean William Prosser of the University of California Law School:

"Every good trial lawyer is, to some extent, an actor, be he artist or ham; and he is also a playwright and a director, who prepares the script, sets the scene and stage-manages the evidence. Mr. Belli is all of that, and more."

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

6-1
"The Dallas
Morning News"
Dallas, Texas

Date: 12-24-63
Edition:
Author:
Editor:
Title: Jack B. Kuege

Character:
or
Classification:
Submitting Office: Dallas

105-47865 -A
NOT REC
47 JAN 10 1964

64 JAN 15 1964

6-17-86
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Ruby's Lawyer Has Reputation As Courtroom 'Barrymore'

By William Flynn

Special to The Washington Post

SAN FRANCISCO — Melvin Mouron Belli is a genius with split personality. He is a lawyer. He is an actor. He will display both these personalities when he strides into the spotlight of world attention as the trial of slick-haired Jack Ruby, the pistol killer of Lee Harvey Oswald, accused assassin of President Kennedy, begins in Texas. Veteran court watchers in California and a number of other states are ready to give eight to three that jurisprudence in Texas never will be the same again when the Belli-Ruby trial concludes. The system seldom is after the white-haired lawyer from the rugged Mother Lode county of California concludes and departs. Melvin Mouron Belli does more than "practice law." He makes it; and while blazing new trails in the evolution of the ancient and honorable English Common Law, he combines the best of John Drew, Groucho, Chico and Zeppo, and the best of John Barrymore, Maurice Chevalier and Richard Burton to provide the audience with a theatrical performance that seldom is equaled in the history of the modern theater.

'King of Torts'

During a 3-decade career, Belli's genius for the law has made him wealthy — and famous from the plaintiff's point of view; and infamous as far as insurance companies and the American Medical Association are concerned.

Winning the proud title of "King of Torts," Belli has eased the pain and suffering of hundreds of clients by giving them two-thirds of the net he won from the insurance companies in prosecuting their claims for damages. They have received several millions of dollars, which is the reason the San Francisco attorney is a "dirty name" to the liability carriers for individuals and members of the medical profession.

He also has practiced criminal law, defending everyone from killers to forgers. Some of his capital-crime clients have sent him Christmas greetings from life imprisonment cells or from homes established after acquittal. Others haven't. They died in San Quentin Prison's apple green, 8-sided gas chamber.

Each of his cases is presented with a flair. His submission of evidence is dramatic, flamboyant. The secret of his success is meticulous preparation and attention-compelling presentation and argument.

Studies at Johns Hopkins

He knows more medicine than many a specialist. He should. He studies annually at Johns Hopkins to keep abreast of the latest in medical science. He knows the law.

Once he sought damages for a woman whose shapely limb had been severed above the knee by the flanged wheels of a San Francisco municipal railway street car. As the trial progressed, he kept touching, turning, shifting a long butcher-paper-wrapped package at his table.

Not once did he refer to it. But its almost constant movement fascinated the men and women of the jury. Finally he asked his client to stand. She did — on one leg.

Then, and only then, did Belli raise the package, slowly unwrap it — to display an artificial limb. He carried it to the one-legged woman, asked her to fit it to the thigh stump. She did. She then stood wan but brave before the jury, supporting herself on one silken clad leg and one mechanical device.

The jury awarded her \$100,000 settlement, a record in those days. Since then the sum for Belli verdicts has reached \$675,000, given one plaintiff in an action against Cutter Laboratories in the

The Washington Post and Times Herald

The Washington Daily News

The Evening Star

New York Herald Tribune

New York Journal-American

New York Mirror

New York Daily News

New York Post

The New York Times

The Worker

The New Leader

The Wall Street Journal

The National Observer

Date

JAN 29 1964

105-4-21-A

NOT RECORDED

128 JAN 28

68 JAN 29 1964

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 6-17-88 BY SP2 RAE/CLM

Salk vaccine case that in several cases affected individuals with polio.

Another case he tried was on behalf of a 600-pound defendant. There was a technical medical problem involved. He emphasize to the jurors that his client had difficulty in getting around because of his weight. Belli arranged to have him swung into the third floor window of the court room by a crane.

Even before he was a professional lawyer, Belli was aware of the power of the courts. He was refused his high school diploma because, as he explains, "I was taken with drink the night of graduation." He sued as a citizen and won, forcing the school board to give him the document.

He was graduated from the University of California law school in the midst of the Depression. He passed the California Bar examination but there was no job in law offices for the future "King of Torts." He became a relief investigator.

In that role he was "vagged," mugged, fingerprinted, jailed, and "floated" out of town with a warning from the police court judge to never let his shadow touch ground in San Diego again.

But he did return — years later. Then he appeared as counsel for the plaintiff before the same judge and qualified himself by presenting his San Diego rap sheet, complete with front and profile photos, and fingerprints. The judge could do nothing but commend him for his rehabilitation.

It's Always the Star

His voice is soft, mellow, or rages with righteous indignation at the cupidity of his opponents. His suits are dark, the best from Saville row. His shirts are handmade with ruffled fronts from which wink diamond studs, sometimes hidden by a flowing, Byron tie. His shirt cuffs are starched to board stiffness. His black boots are high-heeled, and highly polished.

When he sums up in a damage suit, he uses a blackboard. He lists so many thousands of dollars for this loss and that pain and strikes a grand total. Once there was method in his misadmission.

Juror Corrects Addition

A San Francisco Superior Court judge became so transfixed with the itemized list of damages that when Belli struck the total with a flurry of chalk dust, the jurist exclaimed:

"You don't mean \$200,000. Mr. Belli, your client should have \$300,000."

Belli scanned the figures, added again, the jury fascinated. He struck out the \$200,000 total, wrote \$300,000.

The jurors took five minutes to award the client \$300,000.

This use of demonstrative evidence, including skeletons and models of vital organs, has caused Dean Roscoe Pound of Harvard Law School to describe the Ruby defense counsel as "a master of this mode of presenting cases," and as a "contribution to the administration of justice."

Belli modestly says Dean Pound is a fine judge of lawyers.

He also would agree with the estimate that he is a genius — and he lives the role to the hilt.

Every morning his secretary gives him 10, brand new \$10 bills.

"A man has to have walking around money," he explains, slipping them into a solid silver money clip.

He confounds wine waiters with his knowledge of vintages.

He drives a Rolls Royce but frequently has it repainted — beige, purple, silver, black, rose.

"The Rolls is the best car," he says, "but, after all, even a Rolls shouldn't be boring."

Free Flight to Fancy

For night time and nippy San Francisco daytime wear he prefers a crimson lined cape rather than a Chesterfield, velvet-collared topcoat to set off his black Homburg.

But it is in his office and his home that he has really given free flight to his fancy for the spectacular.

Raising his second family with his third wife at 57, he lives on the top floor of a three floor flat building, he owns on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco. On the roof, providing a breath-taking view of San Francisco Bay, he has a gigantic barbecue in

The interior of the home is done in the velvets — crimson to black — of the Gold Rush days of California. One built-in

bookshelf is of special interest. It holds the volumes he has written, more than a score, ranging from frothy bits such as "Life and Law in Russia" to the three volume "Lochner Trials," that is a textbook for members of his profession.

"I've made more than \$1,000 out of that one," he recalls.

Office Near Home

His office, just a few blocks away down Telegraph Hill along Montgomery street, is a renovated 100-year-old building. The exterior is done in the used brick, black iron, and work fashion of the Quarter in New Orleans.

A Philadelphia trained lawyer, William Sweeney, now of New York, once visited the Belli building. After surveying the garish interior of Belli's office, complete with 100-year-old bar, Mother Lode antiques, a steam room in the basement reached by sliding down a man's brass pole, Sweeney wandered into the street, obviously suffering from shock.

"If this was in Philadelphia," he muttered, "the man would be disbarred."

That has occurred to the ethics committee of the California State Bar Association at times, too, but nothing has been done about it.

As for the American Bar Association, Belli says:

"I hang that certificate over the bowl in the wash room."

No Ordinary Counsel

Thus, it may be said, Jack Ruby has no ordinary defense counsel to try to win freedom on the grounds he was insane when he fired the fatal shot that killed the alleged killer of President Kennedy.

And it is also certain beyond a reasonable doubt that Melvin Mournon Belli will provide Ruby with more than a competent defense.

He always gives his client that defense. They have hundreds of thousands of dollars to prove it.

And those who lost cases that resulted in judgments may not know Melvin Mournon Belli but they fear him; and fear him.

He accepts gratitude, respect, and fear as his due but is not overpaid.

After all, "genius" is a reward.



Melvin M. Belli, Jack Ruby's lawyer, has earned a reputation for being a garish genius.

Texas Bar Asks Ban On Practice by Belli

AUSTIN, Tex., March 30 (UPI)—The State Bar today asked permission from the Texas Supreme Court to file for a permanent injunction to bar San Francisco attorney Melvin Belli from practicing law in the State of Texas.

The suit was filed for the State Bar of Texas by Davis Grant, general counsel, and his assistant, L. Money Adams Jr.

The Bar accused Belli of "violent outbursts and outrageous conduct" following the death penalty sentence given his former client, Jack Ruby, in a Dallas County courtroom two weeks ago.

The motion quoted Belli as saying after the verdict, "May I thank this jury for a victory for bigotry. You can rest assured we will appeal this to a court where there is justice. We will take it to a court outside Dallas."

The State Bar's motion said, "Such flagrant violations of the canons of ethics have shocked the consciences of not only the lawyers of Texas and the Nation, but the public as well."

The Bar filed a 10-page petition accompanied by 40 pages of newspaper article reproductions. All the articles involved Belli's criticism of Dallas District Judge Joe Brown and the Ruby trial jury.

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Casper ☒
Callahan ☒
Conrad ☒
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Gale ☒
Rosen ☒
Sullivan ☒
Tavel ☒
Trotter ☒
Tele. Room ☒
Holmes ☒
Gandy ☒

The Washington Post and Times Herald ☒
The Washington Daily News ☒
The Evening Star ☒
New York Herald Tribune ☒
New York Journal-American ☒
New York Mirror ☒
New York Daily News ☒
New York Post ☒
The New York Times ☒
The Worker ☒
The New Leader ☒
The Wall Street Journal ☒
The National Observer ☒
People's World ☒
Date ☒

NOT RECORDED

46 APR 7 1964

72 APR 8 1964

6-17-50

SP21415A

b7(c) b7(d)

10. [redacted] agreed that the allegations were undoubtedly false and stated that he was satisfied and that no action would be taken by the [redacted] papers. He stated, however, that I call [redacted], publisher of the [redacted] and [redacted] him the same facts. He stated [redacted] could be reached at [redacted], his telephone number at the [redacted] offices.

3 Both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were completely satisfied concerning our
4 refutation of these allegations.

It is suggested this memorandum be forwarded to the Domestic Intelligence Division and that consideration be given to immediately interviewing Belli concerning the above-mentioned allegations which he allegedly gave to [redacted] reporter [redacted]. Neither [redacted] desired to reveal the name or their reporter. I did not push them in this regard in view of their close friendship to the Director and the Bureau. I do feel, however, that if it is necessary [redacted] they claim the reporter has obtained from Belli.

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To Dallas
To

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. W. C. Sullivan

DATE:

1-Mr. Belmont
1-Mr. Mohr
1-Mr. Callahan
1-Mr. DeLoach
2-28-64

FROM : Mr. W. A. Branigan

1-Mr. Rosen
1-Mr. Sullivan
1-Mr. Malley
1-Mr. Branigan
1-Mr. Lenihan
1-Mr. Decker
1-Mr. Gheesling

SUBJECT: LEE HARVEY OSWALD
INTERNAL SECURITY - R - CUBA

Memorandum Mr. DeLoach to Mr. Mohr, 2-25-64, reported

information from [redacted] and [redacted] respectively, [redacted] that unnamed [redacted] reporter, described by [redacted] as very reliable, had been advised by Melvin Belli, attorney for Jack Ruby, that Oswald was an FBI informant; that Belli knew from reliable sources that Ruby had been an informant for 8 weeks and Oswald an informant for 13 weeks. [redacted] stated this [redacted] reporter recommended consideration be given to immediately interviewing Belli and the Director noted: "Yes. Make him either put up or shut up."

At 9:20 p.m., 2-28-64, SAC Gordon Shanklin, Dallas, telephonically advised Night Supervisor A. J. Decker as follows. SAC Shanklin and SA Vincent E. Drain interviewed Belli the evening of 2-28-64 in a hotel room secured for that purpose. Belli insisted that his fellow lawyer, Joe Tonahill, be present. Belli was advised that we had received information from a reliable source that he had stated Lee Harvey Oswald was a security-type informant of the FBI for a period of 13 weeks. He was informed that there was absolutely no truth in this and that we desired to secure from him any and all information which he had in this regard.

Belli stated that around the first of the year he had seen an article in the "Houston Post" by Lonnie Hudkins, which article was a rumor to the effect that Oswald might have been an informant of the FBI or CIA, and subsequent to that article Belli subpoenaed Hudkins to appear as a witness at the change of venue hearing before Judge Joe D. Brown. Sometime during that period he heard another rumor around the courthouse to the effect that Oswald might have been an informant of the FBI. Belli related that he questioned Hudkins during the change of venue hearing as he felt that the prosecution might try to use him at a later date. Judge Brown in the change of venue hearing refused to permit Hudkins to answer his question after objections of the prosecution.

Belli stated that he thought at that time and still does think that these rumors originated with William Alexander, Assistant I District Attorney, who had tried to plant other rumors on him and that it was Belli's feeling that Alexander thought Belli might fall for this trap. He stated he placed no credence whatsoever in the rumor that Oswald was an informant and that if there was any credence to such he didn't think

105-82555

AJD: [redacted] 15 1964

(10)

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Memorandum to Mr. Sullivan
Re: Lee Harvey Oswald
105-82555

that such information had any place in the Jack Ruby trial. He pointed out that if he brought this up in the trial he would certainly have to prove it and he would never think of doing so without seeing if it were true from the FBI.

Belli stated that he had talked to numerous reporters and news media during the past several weeks and he could not recall with whom he had talked. However, he did recall, to the best of his memory, that approximately 3 weeks ago someone asked him if he had heard the rumor that Oswald had been an informant of the FBI and he believed that the person asking this question was a reporter. To the best of his memory Belli stated he told this person that he had heard this rumor around the courthouse. He does not recall exactly what he said but he is certain he never said anything to the effect that Oswald had been an informant for 13 weeks or that he had been a security informant. Belli was again emphatically advised that Lee Harvey Oswald has never been an informant of the FBI. He again reiterated that he does not think so and never would place any credence in this rumor.

Belli was also advised that we received information that he had also stated that Jack Leon Ruby had been an informant of the FBI for a period of 8 weeks. Both he and Tonahill stated that they had at no time ever heard anyone state that Ruby was an informant or infer that he was an informant. Belli insisted that he be permitted to call his other co-counsel to the room, Phillip Burleson, and ask him if he had ever heard this rumor. Burleson upon being asked the same question as to whether or not he had ever heard of Ruby being an informant or a rumor to that effect, advised that he had never heard a rumor from anyone to that effect.

Belli, Tonahill and Burleson all stated that they had never told anyone or inferred to anyone that Ruby was an informant of the FBI. Belli stated that he believed he and his co-counsels would have known if Ruby had been an informant of the FBI since they had questioned him in detail about his entire life and he is certain Ruby would have told him if he had been an informant. He stated Ruby had never mentioned in any manner whatsoever cooperating with the FBI.

Upon conclusion Belli stated that he was getting "damned tired" of Assistant District Attorney William Alexander planting rumors which Alexander thought Belli might fall for and it was his opinion that Alexander was probably the source concerning the rumor that Oswald was an informant of the FBI. Belli then specifically asked SAC Shamblin if Ruby had ever been an informant as this was the first that he had ever heard of it and he was advised that Ruby had never been an informant of the FBI. Belli asked no further questions.

Memorandum to Mr. Sullivan
Re: Lee Harvey Oswald
105-82555

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) Although [REDACTED] has categorically denied being the source of rumors that Oswald was an FBI informant, our inquiries strongly point to [REDACTED] as the source of those scurrilous rumors and [REDACTED] may be the source of the alleged rumors concerning Ruby. In view of our experience with [REDACTED] no worthwhile purpose would be served in reinterviewing him and the Director has instructed that no further contacts be had with [REDACTED]

(2) While Belli also categorically denied making any statement as alleged by Hearst officials, it is believed that in order to conclusively pin this matter down Mr. DeLoach's office should contact [REDACTED] and ask that he make the [REDACTED] Belli's statements available [REDACTED]

(3) Immediately following [REDACTED], if it is made available, we will furnish the above details to the President's Commission.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

MR. SULLIVAN

MR. BRANIGAN

LEE HARVEY OSWALD

INTERNAL SECURITY - RUSSIA - CUBA

1 - Mr. Belmont
1 - Mr. Mohr
1 - Mr. Callahan
1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Rosen 3-4-64

1 - Mr. Sullivan
1 - Mr. Malley
1 - Mr. Lenihan
1 - Mr. Decker
1 - Mr. Gheesling
1 - Mr. Anderson
1 - Mr. Branigan

Memorandum Branigan to Sullivan 2-28-64, set forth results of interview by SAC Shanklin, Dallas, and SA Vincent E. Drain with Melvin Belli, attorney for Jack Ruby, concerning allegation that Belli had stated Oswald and Jack Ruby were FBI informants. Belli stated he had heard rumors to that effect, however, placed no credence whatsoever in these rumors and that in his opinion these rumors originated with William Alexander, Assistant District Attorney, who had tried to plant other rumors on him. It was Belli's feeling that Alexander thought Belli might fall for the trap. It was recommended that no worth-while purpose would be served

On 3-3-64, SAC Shanklin advised that [redacted] was contacted by him, and it was pointed-out to [redacted] that we keep getting indications that [redacted] is the source of the rumors that Oswald was an FBI informant. It was pointed out to him that [redacted] denied having any information in this regard. It was also pointed out that [redacted] we want him to put it on the line or stop talking. [redacted] said he felt that any information along this line was the old rumor, as he has told [redacted] to stop talking and that he [redacted] is at present the only one on his staff supposed to talk to the press. He volunteered that he had heard nothing regarding this rumor around the courthouse in recent weeks. He stated that this rumor of Oswald being an informant of the FBI or CIA had no place in the trial of Ruby, and that it would not be brought up by him. He stated he would [redacted] quiet and make no further remarks in this regard.

The memorandum of 2-28-64 referred to above also recommended that in order to conclusively pin down whether Belli

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. SULLIVAN
RE: LEE HARVEY OSWALD
105-82555

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made statements that Oswald was an FBI informant as was Jack Ruby, contact should be made with [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] Publications, to request that he make the [REDACTED] Belli's statements available for [REDACTED] was contacted 3-3-64 by Assistant Director DeLoach at which time he stated he would [REDACTED]

ACTION:

When [REDACTED] alleged Belli interview [REDACTED] and you will be advised of the results. At that time, too, we will furnish the above details to the President's Commission so they can be aware as to how we pin down this latest allegation.

DE:He

WEL
OK - [REDACTED] Dallas [REDACTED]
should have my contact
whenever [REDACTED]
about anything. He is to
be placed on file as
"no contact".

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THE MAN WHO HOPES

McIntire _____
Casper _____
Callahan _____
Conrad _____
DeLoach _____
Evans _____
Gale _____
Rosen _____
Sullivan _____
Tavel _____
Trotter _____
Tele. Room _____
Holmes _____
Gandy _____

By DONOVAN BESS and WORTH GATEWOOD

ONLY a lawyer with the unshakeable ego of Melvin Belli would expect to win acquittal for a man who committed murder before 50 million witnesses. But in Belli's serene view, the prosecution has anything but an airtight case against his client, Jack Ruby, who starred in TV's only live killing.

Belli has already won a pre-trial psychiatric examination for Ruby, self-appointed executioner of President Kennedy's presumed assassin, thus setting the stage for a temporary-insanity defense. This in itself is a victory, since there was no precedent in Texas law for court-appointed psychiatrists.

The lawyer's confidence in his ability to save Ruby from the electric chair is genuine enough—and it is also a carefully polished and theatrically exploited facet of the Belli image that has swayed jurors for 30-odd years.

"You must believe in your talents," he says blandly, "because when you face a jury you are completely alone. If you are nervous and afraid, the jury will sense it."

'In Court I Must Feel I'm Better Than My Opponent'

"Call it ego if you wish," he concedes. "All I know is that when I am in court I must feel that I am better than my opponent. There may be better lawyers than I, but so far I haven't come upon any of them in court."

The author of this refreshingly outspoken appraisal of himself is, on the record, perhaps the most successful personal injury lawyer in the long history of torts, which is legalese for a

suit for damages based on a wrongful or negligent act.

Belli estimates that he wins at least \$1 million a year for his clients, most of whom come to him after getting run over by streetcars, mangled in factory machinery or victimized in some fashion by allegedly careless or inept doctors.

Just two weeks ago, his habit of thinking big paid off in a \$924,396 judgment for the widow and children of 31-year-old pianist William Kapell, who was killed in an air crash in 1953. Belli had asked a cool million, basing his demands on Kapell's high earning potential.

Though million-dollar awards are rare even for him, a hundred or so of his clients have been the grateful recipients of \$100,000 judgments in negligence suits. He takes a third if he wins and nothing if he loses, which isn't often.

Belli's impressive batting average against insurance companies hasn't exactly endeared him to the losing underwriters, who

The Washington Post and Times Herald _____
The Washington Daily News _____
The Evening Star _____
New York Herald Tribune _____
New York Journal-American _____
New York Mirror _____
New York Daily News 94 _____
New York Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Worker _____
The New Leader _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The National Observer _____
People's World _____

Date _____

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